facilitated when the former is being docked to the latter. These means in particular allow cabin module **14** to be guided lengthways by a corner effect, during docking, to its final position on aeroplane **16**, and then allow this module **14** to be held in this position.

As is shown by FIG. **12**, aeroplane **16** includes fairing elements **90** intended to provide aerodynamic continuity between the portion of the fuselage which streamlines nose cone **42** and upper wall **66** of cabin module **14**. These elements **90** are installed on hinged arms **91** (FIG. **13**) allowing these elements to be moved between an open position, represented in FIG. **12**, in which these elements are radially separated towards the outside and towards the front of the aeroplane, in order to enable cabin module **14** to be conveyed to its final position of docking to the aeroplane, and a closed position, illustrated in FIG. **14**, in which these elements are radially brought back towards the inside and towards the rear, such that they cover a space between nose cone **42** and cabin module **14**. In this closed position, elements **90** provide the aerodynamic continuity of the fuselage of aeroplane **16**. FIG. **13** illustrates an intermediate position of fairing elements **90**.

FIGS. **12** to **14** also illustrate second docking devices of removable cabin module **14** to aeroplane **16**, fitted to the lengthways ends of module **14** and to the corresponding ends of nose cone **42** and tail cone **44** of aeroplane **16**.

These second docking devices include lengthways rods **92** (FIG. **14**) intended to assist radial retention of cabin module **14** on aeroplane **16**. These rods **92** are installed sliding in lengthways bores **94** (FIG. **13**) made in transverse wall **74** delimiting nose cone **42**, and can be slid lengthways between a retracted position, in which rods **92** are fully housed in bores **94** (FIG. **13**), and a deployed position, in which rods **92** project outside bores **94** (FIG. **14**) and penetrate in corresponding bores (not visible in the figures) made in corresponding end transverse wall **68** of cabin module **14**.

First and second docking devices **80**, **92** form means for holding cabin module **14** in reception space **40**.

The foregoing description of elements **70**, **72**, **90**, **92** with reference to FIGS. **12** to **14** can be transposed to tail cone **44** of aeroplane **16**, and to the corresponding lengthways end of cabin module **14**.

It can be seen from the above description that air terminal **10** and aeroplane **16** allow implementation of a method for transferring a payload such as passengers and/or luggage and/or freight, between air terminal **10**, and therefore more generally an aerodrome or airport including this air terminal, and the cabin of aeroplane **16** housed in removable cabin module **14**. This method is remarkable in that removable cabin module **14** is separated from aeroplane **16** and is docked to docking module **12** during the transfer.

FIGS. **1** to **14** illustrate the main successive steps of a method for boarding passengers on board aeroplane **16** according to a preferred embodiment of the invention.

This method includes the transfer of the passengers from room **24** of air terminal **10** into the cabin integrated in cabin module **14** docked to docking module **12** (FIGS. **1** and **2**) via door **26***a* of docking module **12** and door **69***b* of cabin module **14** facing above-mentioned door **26***a*.

On completion of this transfer doors **69***b* and **26***a* are closed, and beams **36** are then retracted (FIG. **3**).

Cabin module **14** is then moved downwards by means of lifting device **54**, passing through opening **32** of floor **34** of room **24** (FIG. **4**), and then put in position in aeroplane **16** (FIGS. **5** and **6**) after engaging locking tabs **72** in corresponding grooves **70**.

Lifting device **54** is then uncoupled from cabin module **14** (FIGS. **7** and **8**), and devices **80** and **92** for docking cabin module **14** to aeroplane **16** are activated (FIGS. **9** to **14**).

Aeroplane **16** is then ready to move to a takeoff runway.

The same steps can be performed in reverse order to implement a method for deplaning the passengers from aeroplane **16**.

The foregoing description can naturally be transposed to the loading and unloading of luggage or freight.

Aeroplane **16** described above also has the advantage that it is easy to replace removable cabin module **14** by another removable cabin module, which can be distinguished from the first, for example, by the internal layout of its cabin, or even by the type of payload which can be housed in it.

Aeroplane **16** is thus suitable for implementing a method for modifying the internal configuration of its passenger or freight cabin, including at least the following steps:

deactivation of docking means **80**, **92** holding a first removable cabin module **14** in a reception space **40** in the aircraft **16**;

removal of this first cabin module **14** outside this reception space **40**;

installation, in reception space **40**, of a second removable cabin module **14** having an internal configuration different to that of the first removable cabin module;

activation of docking devices **80**, **92** to hold the second module in the reception space.

It is thus easy for an airline to replace a module having an economy class cabin by a module having a first class or business class cabin, or vice versa.

It is also easy to replace a module suitable for passenger transport by a module suitable for freight transport.

The method can also be implemented in the course of manufacture of aeroplane **16**, in order to install a cabin module in the aeroplane which is specially equipped for testing, and subsequently, after testing, to replace this cabin module by a module suitable for commercial exploitation of the aeroplane in preparation for its final delivery.

What is claimed is:

1. An aircraft comprising:

a removable cabin module, comprising a floor, an upper aircraft fuselage portion connected to the floor, and a first and a second end wall, wherein the first and second end walls, the floor and the upper aircraft fuselage portion form a cabin for transport of passengers, luggage, freight or combinations thereof;

a reception space for receiving the removable cabin module;

a nose cone comprising a cockpit and a transverse wall;

a tail cone comprising a tail unit and a transverse wall;

a lower structure comprising a lower fuselage portion truncated in a horizontal plane, wherein the reception space is delimited between the transverse wall of the nose cone and the transverse wall of the tail cone, and above the horizontal plane of the lower structure;

a centring device for centring the removable cabin module in the reception space; and

a retaining device for retaining the removable cabin module in the reception space, wherein the retaining device comprises a first docking device for securely coupling the floor of the removable cabin module to the horizontal plane of the lower structure, wherein the first docking device comprises a first element forming a hook which is coupled securely to the floor of the removable cabin module, and a second element forming a hook coupled securely to the horizontal plane of the lower structure, wherein the retaining device comprises a second docking device for securely coupling the first or second end